



# Rusting Away



140 52 42

## Chapter 1 by webscape

What if there was a little car who couldn't find the roadway?

## Chapter 2 by webscape



Charlie woke up in the middle of a field, just like yesterday and the day before, stretched his tyres and blinked his headlights. The sun was rising and the corn tickled his body as it moved from side to side in the gentle breeze.

## Chapter 3 by Kitiōn



Next to Charlie was his friend scarecrow who had a good view across the fields, and scarecrow would tell Charlie about the things he could see in the distance, and this was how Charlie's day would pass.

Quite often than not they would be visited by birds who would also bring news of the outside world, and Charlie would as always keep asking the same questions such as was there much traffic on the roads today, or have you seen any little cars like me.

## Chapter 4 by Mike E.



The birds would sigh, "No Charlie none quite like you." for Charlie always asked the same question. The response varied but the answer remained the same, "No." Charlie's gears grinded against years of rust and corrosion. What he wouldn't give for some gas, new tyres, and a driver. To let the rubber meet the road, to flow between traffic, to let his engine scream at top speed.

He loved Scarecrow, but he dreamt of the road every night. It was one of the those nights that he awoke to a tickle in his engine.

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"Hey! Stop that!"

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A small bird fluttered out of a rusted hole in his hood top. Twig in beak the little bird chirped, "Oh sorry, I had no idea you were alive!"

Charlie flashed his blinkers furiously, "So you had no problems poking around in someone's corpse, but now that I'm alive you have a problem!"

"To be honest, you make a great spot for a nest, I've been building one all night, surprised you didn't notice sooner," the bird remarked.

"A nest! Well in that case..."

### Chapter 5 by Maddy wright



"Its nice to meet you, I have been looking for a carpenter or someone who can help me, could you help me with something?" Said Charlie. "Well I am no genius" exclaimed the small bird "but... I am sure I can try. What is it you wanted help with exactly?"

"Well you see, I have been stuck here for many, many years and well I would like to feel the feeling of fresh cold tarmac and smooth new wheels as they spin round and round on the road, I want to become alive again.

"Um... Well I, you see am just a small bird, I shan't expect you will be back on the roads anytime soon with my help"

And so the bird flew off into the outside world, into the world of yellow lines, double and single, of shiny, newly cleaned wheel plates.

As charlie sat there in a lake of his own sadness his best friend stood next to him pestering with his spickey strings of straw almomst picking at the rust of his passenger door.

Charlie sat there for nights, for days for months, for years until one day, grey and wrinkled the small bird returned..

### Chapter 6 by Luke Meyers



"Oh, my flying friend! It has been so long since I saw your fine feathers. Pray tell me, what news have you of the world and its roadways?"

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"That's okay! I'm sure you've done your best. Tell me though, have you found a road for me?"

The bird shook his beak sadly. "Charlie, I wish I could tell you what you want to hear. But instead, I can only tell you what you must come to accept. There is no road for you. Even if there were, you are in no shape to drive on it. Your engine is rusty, your axles are bent, and your wheels are falling off. As you see me wrinkled and feathertorn before you, so must you see yourself and know that all things pass with time, most of all ourselves."

Charlie sat for a very long moment, in quiet contemplation. Then he said, "Yes, bird, you're right. I have held on too long to a dream of what I can no longer have. I must accept that I have come to my end."

"Don't sound so sad, Charlie. Sometimes an ending is just a beginning. You never know what the dawn may bring."

They watched the sun go down over the wide, open field, and pondered this. The stars shone above them, turning in their great, slow circles. The moon shone her sympathy.

In the morning, the sun did dawn. And on its heels came a sight that made Charlie blink his headlights in disbelief. It was a whole flock of birds! Many hundreds of them. They settled around Charlie and his aged companion (and the scarecrow, of course), and chirped a happy chorus. "We have found our home! Our wise elder has led us to the shelter we seek!"

And the birds began to pull straw from the scarecrow, and explore every nook and cranny of Charlie's rust-pocked chassis for the perfect spot to build a nest.

## Chapter 7 by Mnop Rarotunga



The scarecrow swayed happily as the small birds scratched itches he thought he would never be able to scratch, while Charlie engine felt it would grow 3 sizes from seeing the joy the small bird families had as they settle inside its cozy and safe interior.

"Welcome friends! I may not have a road for me, but I will be a safe place for all of you to rest your wings. I ask only that you share your stories with me in the world!"

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"Oh thank you, thank you Charlie! We will always be grateful to you."

And so the years passed, birds came and went, growing old and birthing new baby birds. Charlie watched over them all, content in the warmth and rhythmic sound of their breath. But, slowly and surely, Charlie began losing power, his headlights growing dimmer and his thoughts losing the jovial curiosity of days gone by.

## Chapter 8 by intellikat



When Charlie passed, all of his friends were there for him.

Scarecrow stood as shade above for the many generations who perched silently on Charlie's bonnet, their beaks bowed in silence. The elder bird, Charlie's dear friend, had long since passed himself, but his grandson stood respectfully atop Charlie's rusty hood ornament now and spoke a few gentle words in loving memory of their departed automotive companion. He told the story of how his grandfather had met Charlie, and then Scarecrow shared the dream that Charlie had always had of pacing the roadways once again, and how that dream had faded, and how Charlie's heart and hood had instead been opened to the avian families in attendance now.

It was a lovely moment for all. And then as it is with all things... the moment ended.

Life went on for the birds. Though Charlie's old, raspy voice was no longer with them and his windshield wipers had given their last baby bird a ride, his comfortable chassis still provided for them all. In wind, in rain, in sleet and snow, Charlie's body was still their beloved home, and though rusty in a few odd spots, it held up remarkably well for its age.

And then one morning, Scarecrow spied a strange sight. He blinked his triangular eyes and watched as a man approached from beyond the wooden fence. He was certainly headed in their direction, and as he mounted the fence and came within distance, the birds all exploded up from Charlie's body as they were wont to do in general alarm, and scattered to the nearby trees and telephone line.

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Henry, the other man, stepped from the cab of the lorry with a snubby cigar jammed into the corner of his mouth. "Looks a wreck, Dan."

"No, no. Only a few spots here or there. Nothing we can't repair. They sure don't make 'em like this anymore, that's for sure." Dan leaned in to look into Charlie's cab. "None quite like you," he said, and in that magical moment, something happened that neither of the men were able to explain even many years later. From above them, the birds all seemed to break into... applause... was the only way they could describe it. In unison, the birds seemed to be cheering, and after only a brief moment of this, they fluttered away and disappeared in the distance.

"That was strange," said Henry, who was picking up his cigar from the ground where his agape mouth had dropped it.

"Hey. Have a look at this scarecrow," said Dan. "This thing must be fifty years old!" He looked around. "Still guarding the cornfield after all these years. If he could talk... wonder if he could tell us how this old car got here in the first place."

"Let's hook it up, Dan. My wife's been goading me about the long hours I've been pulling lately."

"Sure thing, sure thing." Dan made his way over to his partner and helped him draw a large hook from the lorry's winch. "Let bring this old fella home."

And so it was that things came full circle for Charlie. He got his wish in the end. And I even had the chance to see him. Just once. One day he came driving along that dusty dirt path and stopped just for moment on the other side of the wooden fence... a new driver, a new coat of paint, new tyres... all just as he had dreamt of. He honked at me, and if I could wave, I would have. I told the birds about it when they returned to perch on me and share stories of their new home... an abandoned barn not two kilometres away... well, as the crow flies. I missed all of their company some days, but I understood the lesson well. All things change in time. And one can never know what is coming next.

I'm standing here now on a cold day, looking up at the stars twinkling in the sky. And what do you know? Here comes Charlie, and out of his doors come Dan and what looks to be

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"There he is, son. Just like I said."

"Wow! He'll be perfect, Dad."

"We'll just need to pay the farmer on our way out what he said. Let's get him down from there and put him into the back seat."

"Mom, gonna love this!"

And so it was that I, too, went through my own change. From a lonely cornfield to the centre of attention at a Harvest festival and a permanent residence as decoration in the yard of Charlie's new owner, Dan. I couldn't imagine it getting any better.

That is, until I heard a familiar sound rise up from a nearby barn.

the end

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